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GOLDEN GATE



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THE GOLDEN GATE

BY

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THE GOLDEN GATE.

A LEGEND.

ONCE upon a time there were two little girls who lived within a quarter of a mile of each other, in an old German city. They were of the same age and both had golden hair and eyes as blue as the summer's sky. Fleeta's hair hung in wavy curls, and, when she was in a good humor, the blue sky in her eyes fairly sparkled with light. Gretchen's hair, on the contrary, cropped out in short, unequal lengths from under her close-fitting cap, and the blue beneath her lashes was dimmed by suffering and care. Fleeta was rich; she dwelt in a beautiful house, was idolized by her parents, and gratified in every whim. Gretchen was poor, lived alone with her invalid mother in a bare garret, and hardly knew the meaning of play. Fleeta had exquisite toys in abundance, and great big dolls with real, flaxen hair, dressed in gay silks and laces. She often was taken to grand concerts.

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and many a time the rarest music floated through her father's house. She had beautiful clothes, too, and, for a pet, the loveliest little white dog in the world, which she led by a bright ribbon fastened around his neck. Sometimes the little fellow would wish to lie still, for Fleeta gave him so much cake and sugar he grew fat and lazy: but she would jerk him and make him follow her, for was he not *her* dog? And if the ribbon choked him, she thought—it certainly was his own fault.

Now Gretchen had only a poor wooden doll which she had picked up in the street. It had no flaxen hair, for the simple reason that the top of its head was gone; and no fine silk dresses either, for it had come into her possession naked; and naked it always remained, except when, on bitter cold nights, she would press it closely to her, as she lay on her straw in the corner, and wind her scanty covering about its stiff little limbs. *Her* music, on week-days, came from a strange square box, which she sometimes met with in the street. A dark-faced man with a long beard and round brass ear-rings, would turn its handle, and straightway the sounds would come pouring out of it. If it happened to visit the street where Fleeta lived, and halt near her curtained window, she would

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shudder at the "horrid noise," and beg her maid to close the sash.

But Gretchen did not shudder when the organ-man came into the alley where she lived. No, she would listen to it with parted lips, sure that some blessed spirit was within, trying to make itself known. Sometimes the box would be large and high, and in its upper portion she could see stiff little men and women bobbing up and down toward each other, or turning solemnly to the music, in a measured waltz.

On such occasions, Gretchen felt herself to be among the favored of the earth; and when the organ-man had walked away further than she dared follow, she would run up the rickety stairs to describe to her mother all she had heard and seen. Then the poor, worn woman would smile for a moment and find comfort in her little girl's joy.

Gretchen's clothes, unlike Fleeta's, were very scanty, and of the coarsest stuffs; and for a pet she had only a poor lame kitten, which she had rescued from some cruel boys. The kitten, weak and hungry as it was, needed no bright ribbon to make it follow her; she led it by the cord of kindness, and though poor pussy often had only a soft caress and a gentle word for its supper, it knew well enough at such times

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that Gretchen's own porringer must be empty also.

Fleeta had troops of friends, and often went to gay parties, where the girls danced gracefully, and swung their beautiful dresses daintily, and felt quite like little women; where the boys bowed like princes, and slipped pretty confectious or flowers into the hands of the maidens they liked best; and where brilliant lights and gay music kept the party awake long after their young eyes should have been closed in sleep. On the other hand, Gretchen's friends were very few. Her companions were the children of the street, whose wicked words often made her tremble, though she would sometimes wind her thin arm about some tattered little shoulder, and whisper that it was wicked to swear, and that mother said God wished everybody to be gentle and good.

Both of the little girls had heard the blessed lesson which the Son of God taught, and is ever teaching, to the sons of men. There are no "rich" and "poor" in His school, and whether Fleeta was shown in her gilded Bible the words, "Thy will be done," or "Love one another," or Gretchen heard them from her mother's lips, the lesson was the same. The same, yet not the same; for with Fleeta, the words entered no

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further than her eye or ear, while Gretchen's heart opened to receive them, and they nestled there, and grew until her poor life was glorified by their radiance. They taught her not to murmur at her lot ; to toil patiently, and to take with gratitude the few joys that were given her.

No harsh, unkind word ever fell from Gretchen's lips ; and on fair-days, when she stood in the market-place selling, or trying to sell, her mother's knitting and needle-work, her voice was as gentle and cheerful at the close of the day as in its beginning, however wearied she might be.

Sometimes when trudging through the long streets, with her basket hanging on her arm, or balanced upon her head, she would pause to soothe some poor fretted child, or aid another in carrying a heavy burden, or help a blind man over the crossings, or pick up and restore the fallen fruit of the old woman who sold plums and pretzels at the corner.

But what she loved best to do was to help her mother, who was often too ill to work ; or to assist the poor little lame girl, who lived in the room below, to go down the broken stairway and breathe the air and sunshine of the street. This poor little cripple loved her, and well she

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might, for Gretchen's cheerful words and gentle arm were the joy of her life, and since that sweet face had lit up the old garret, had not the boys in the street ceased to mock her and call her "little broken-back?"

Yes, Gretchen had friends, after all, besides her mother and the lame girl and the kitten, but cold and hunger and rough usage had made their ways uncouth and distant, and their dingy rags might have soiled Fleeta's beautiful garments had they chanced to brush past her on the street.

Fleeta, you see, was quite different from Gretchen in her thoughts and feelings, and her days were not spent as well as Gretchen's. Often they were spoiled by discontent and by fretting for pleasures beyond her reach, or by her pride and unkindness of heart.

Even those who loved her most sometimes would shake their heads sadly and say, "Ah! Fleeta, why not be happy and good? Thou hast nothing to make thee otherwise." But the wilful girl would make some angry reply, or burst into a passionate fit of crying, and declare that no girl ever was more ill-used or scolded than herself.

Her little brothers and sisters looked in vain to her for amusement or gentle words, though

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in her own selfish way she would play with them as long as *her* will and *her* pleasure were allowed to rule.

She would sometimes, it is true, throw her arms around her mother's neck and kiss her with some show of affection, when a new toy or longed-for pleasure awaited her, though the same mother had perhaps a moment before been grieved by her sulkiness or fits of passion. On Sundays, too, she would drop the silver into the poor-box with her pretty little fingers in so dainty a way, that her aunt said it would do any one's heart good to see her. But, for all that, the "love one another" had not yet entered her heart.

She was exacting and thoughtless toward all her playmates ; and as for *poor* children, she had no pity nor kindness for them at all. To her eyes they were all only ragged or dirty or vulgar ; and she quite forgot that human hearts beat as strongly in their little human bodies as in her own. Money was to her the great good of life ; and she was proud of her wealth, not because it gave her the means of making others better or happier, but because it made her, as she foolishly supposed, of more consequence than the poorer people about her.

Fleeta's maid was related to Gretchen's

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mother, and sometimes she would find her way to the garret where her kinswoman lived, and amaze her listeners with glowing accounts of all that was going on at her master's house. She would tell of the splendid balls and feasts held there, how the ladies and gentlemen sparkled with diamonds, and how the room seemed alive more with velvet and satins and flowers and jewels and perfumes than with human beings, and how lovely Miss Fleeta looked in her ball-dress—"just like a cloud of lace and gauze;" and how, above all, the little girl had been "fairly loaded with gifts on Christmas Eve, and the other children too—though Miss Fleeta had the most."

"If you had seen the tree, Katrine," she said one day to Gretchen's mother, "you'd remember it all your days. There the grand company all stood, Miss Fleeta first, and I holding her by the hand so as to make her wait till the Christ-child, you know, Gretchen, had lighted the candles and rung the little bell. At last we heard it ring, and the doors opened and the company all crowded in, Miss Fleeta springing away from me in an instant, leaving me there alone among all the fine ladies—"

"But the tree?" interrupted Gretchen breathlessly.

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"Oh! it was beautiful; all lit up with thousands of little lights and sparkling with colored glass balls. Every branch was hung full of the loveliest things, and on the top of it was a tiny angel in gold and silver, with such pretty wings—"

"A real angel, Lena?"

"No, no; a gift-angel,—and then down in the moss under the tree there was an image of the Christ-child made of wax, but just for all the world like a beautiful baby, with lambs standing 'round him."

Gretchen listened with sparkling eyes and head bent eagerly forward as Lena talked on.

"And oh! you should have seen the things—such heaps of presents! All the tables about were covered! Miss Fleeta had rings and bracelets and chains and books and dolls and a play-house with little mirrors in it, full of the loveliest furniture, and little doll-ladies standing in it, or sitting as natural as life. And then there were china cups and saucers, and a little gold goblet and pitcher, and a big box full of wild animals that would have stood your hair on end to see them—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Gretchen, starting, "were they alive?"

"No, no, you foolish little one," said the

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maid, "they were not a bit bigger than your kitten there. And near the tree there was a new chair all of carved wood and red velvet, just big enough for Miss Fleeta; and a dancing man worked by machinery, and dozens of other things!"

"And what did the other children get?" asked Gretchen, delighted.

"Oh, I haven't time to tell you half; there were drums and trumpets and whips and shops and tools and drawing-books and violins and villages, for the boys; and horses on rockers as big as live ponies, and lots of things for all, down to the baby. Even we servants got something, and I've a present for you, too, Gretchen," added the maid, quite out of breath, as she drew something from her pocket.

It was a very pretty blue-and-gilt bonbon box filled with candies.

"Oh! Lena, thank you! thank you!" cried Gretchen, as she eagerly received her treasure. "Oh! see, mother,—see how beautiful! Did the Christ-child send it to me, Lena?"

Lena hesitated a moment, and then said, "Yes, certainly he did, as much as to any of the other children."

Gretchen insisted upon her mother and Lena tasting some of her candies, and then she ran

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down the stair in great glee to give a share to the little lame girl.

"Bless her!" said Lena to the mother, "she hasn't any more envy than a baby. Now, do you know, with all these things, Miss Fleeta cried herself to sleep on Christmas Eve because her sister's new wax doll opened its eyes the widest? I declare, Katrine, my back aches from sitting so long on this box. It's a shame you're not able to have things more comfortable, and you so sickly, too. But Hans and I are going to get married next month, and after that, you know, you are always to have a home with us, for didn't your mother nurse mine in her last long sickness, and close her poor eyes, may God bless her soul!"

At this moment Gretchen came running up the stairs.

"Oh, Lena, there was a beautiful sugar strawberry in the box, and I give it to Bertha. You ought to have heard her laugh! Oh, how good the Christ-child is! Do you know I dreamed, one night, that he came to see me, and put his arms around my neck, and promised to bring me something on Christmas Eve; and when I woke up, there pussy had been lying all the time close by my head."

"That was a fine dream," said Lena, "but,

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bless me ! how late it is growing, and I have to curl my little mistress' hair for a children's party,—Good-by !”

And this was the way that the two children, Gretchen and Fleeta, lived and felt in the great German city. They seldom met each other, and when they did, Fleeta would turn her head haughtily away from “the forlorn, ragged little thing,” and Gretchen would look eagerly after her in simple admiration of the beautiful little lady with the golden curls.

The time came, however, when the two girls no longer could pass each other on the busy street. Before a year had passed, a fearful fever appeared among the children of the town ; and on the selfsame day two little graves were made. One of these was in a beautiful cemetery where tall white monuments glistened in the sunlight, flecked by the waving branches of trees or shadowed by stately evergreens. The other was in a well-trodden graveyard where crowded grass-grown mounds and sometimes a roughly made cross were all that could be seen.

In one grave was placed a white casket garlanded with flowers. It had been conveyed there by a procession of grand carriages filled with weeping relatives and friends, who gath-

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ered around while the solemn funeral rites were performed.

Into the other grave a plain wooden coffin was lowered, and the hurried burial service pronounced over it was broken by the sobs of the sole mourners—a pale careworn woman, accompanied by three or four frightened-looking children, barefooted and capless, and a lame girl holding a kitten in her arms.

Even then,—so runs the legend—the two children, Gretchen and Fleeta were entering, side by side, the lanes of Paradise. The cruel disease was forgotten, and free as air they trod the pearly path, their eyes eagerly fixed upon what seemed to be a cloud of glorious light in the distance. As they drew nearer, they found themselves in front of a Golden Gate. Around it the tenderest rosy light played and trembled, while, from within, soft music seemed pressing upon it, causing it to vibrate in sweet accord.

Gretchen drew back, awed and bewildered by the flood of dazzling light which streamed upon her; but Fleeta approached boldly, casting a haughty glance upon Gretchen as she passed.

What was the gate to Fleeta's eyes, after all, but gold; and had she not always been used

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to gold? Music, too, had ever been as her daily food, though this music indeed disturbed her strangely. Surely this gate was for the rich, the honored of earth; and was she not one of them? So she knocked confidently; while poor Gretchen, feeling unworthy, drew timidly aside, though the golden light streamed upon her whichever way she turned.

“Stand back, little beggar-girl!” said Fleeta; “do you not see that the gate can open only for such as I?” and she knocked again more impatiently than before. At last, as though the music could be contained within no longer, the golden portal opened, and a shining angel stood before them.

Fleeta would have pushed in past him, but, with a firm hand, he gently forced her back.

“Why do you knock at this gate?” he asked; “only the truly rich can enter here.”

“Let me go in, then,” replied the girl, “*I am rich!*” and she cast back a look of triumph upon poor Gretchen.

“Well,” replied the angel, “if you are rich you shall enter; but where are your riches?”

“My riches!” exclaimed Fleeta, “why, they are down in the world; father and mother have them now; but they used to be mine.”

“But,” asked the angel, sorrowfully, “what

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have you brought with you? I must see your treasures before you can enter."

Fleeta hung her head.

Then the angel turned to the other child, and said, in tones that seemed a part of the glorious music,

"Why do you not arise and enter?"

"Alas!" replied Gretchen, "I have no treasures. I have always been very poor, so I cannot enter the gate of the rich."

"Poor!" exclaimed the angel, "where is your poverty?"

"I left it upon the earth," said Gretchen, brightening with a sudden hope.

"And have you brought nothing with you?"

"Nothing, nothing at all," rejoined the child sadly; "but," she added in a brighter tone, "I am willing to wait, for I know that the dear Lord Jesus will yet send his angel for me."

"He has sent his angel," said the gate-keeper, "and this is the gate through which you are to enter; for your soul, though you know it not, is laden with treasures," and, with these words, he gently drew Gretchen in and closed the portal.

And this is the legend of The Golden Gate.

THE WONDERFUL WELL.

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH FROM LIFE.

LOUISE, Sophie, and I are sisters, and, when we were little girls, it was our great delight to go to grandmother's. Grandmother lived in a city house, but it had such a big green garden that, when you looked out of the back windows, you felt almost as if you were in the country. There were flowers and shrubs and grapevines in it, a currant-bush near the pump, and a real live apricot-tree that grew up in one corner straight past the drawing-room window, and nearly up to the windows of grandmother's chamber. When the apricots were ripe, it was fun to jump up and try to catch one, if you were in the garden ; or if you were in the drawing-room it was just as pleasant to reach out and try to pluck the nearest ; or even if you were in grandma's room, and nobody was there to scream that you surely would fall and break your neck, it was grand sport to reach down and try to catch one of the lovely little things with the hooked handle of grandma's green parasol. Not that

you ever could get one in any of these ways—no, indeed. The tree seemed enchanted, and held its tender, peachy treasures among its bright leaves as firmly as though they were frosted gold; for, you see, they were always just a quarter of an inch beyond the reach of any one unless he or she were in the tree. Grandma's colored man, Robert, who took care of the horses, sometimes would stand on the pump and reach down a few for us; but the time of times was when grandma allowed us to hold quilts and things under the tree while Robert shook it. Oh! But unless you're very little, and have a grandma, and the grandma has just such an apricot-tree in her garden, and every apricot on it is soaked through with sunlight and sweetness, you can't possibly understand it, after all.

I don't know why I tell you of the apricots here in this winter story, except that, perhaps, it is the best way of introducing you to grandma. She was like them in some respects—so bright and fresh and gentle and tender, with just a pretty bloom of age over her; and she had a light, sunshiny way of her own, just as they had, you know, swaying there among the branches.

Well, on Christmas it was grandma's custom to invite us all to dinner, and you may be sure

every one who was invited went. It is strange to have to tell you our names—it seems as if you ought to know them. First there were father and mother, and Aunt Jane and Uncle Augustus Allen and cousin Gus and Rosalie, and Louise and Lizzie and Sophy and Charley and Kate and Leslie and ever so many others—aunts, uncles, cousins, and relatives. And there was one stately great-uncle, of whom I now can remember only a shining gray circle of hair on top, a gorgeous bunch of seals dangling from beneath a big vest, and a pair of glossy boots below. I suppose there was more of him. Oh! yes, there was a hand that came out very slowly and settled softly on our heads, with, “This is Jane Eliza’s little one, eh!” or, “Well, Sophia, the little girl favors *you*, most certainly,” or, “So, this is Christmas, my dear?” To which last we would reply, in a very uncomfortable yet happy way, “Yes, sir,” and run off, with a queer feeling that there was a kind, stately Somebody in the world who knew us, and belonged to mother and father and grandma, and who came to life only on special family occasions.

I don’t remember much about the dinner, except that the “grace” was a little longer than usual, that we children were helped twice to turkey, and there was some delicious kind of fruit.

pudding, which nobody knows how to make nowadays. There were quite a good many flowers around, and celery-tops in high glasses, and little laughs trickling in and out among the soft clatter of knives and forks. Then somebody would stand up and speak; and grandma, looking quite pleased, would nod her head, and everybody would look toward her, and we children, glancing slyly at each other, would make believe we were trying not to laugh at something which we thought was in our minds. Then—well—very soon we'd all be up in the parlor again, playing games and having—oh! such good times! Grandma would sit in the big chair looking on in her smiling way, with a pretty flush on her cheeks, and her hands clasped on her knee almost as if she were praying.

Usually, a lovely Christmas-tree full of toys and *bonbons* and twinkling lights would grow right up in the middle of the back parlor while we were at dinner; but, on this special Christmas day, the back-room was shut up tight all the time before dinner, and when, later, we went up stairs from the table, in a merry crowd, it was still closed, though the front room was brilliantly lighted. Gus and Allen, the two big-boy cousins, staid out of the front parlor after dinner, but uncle Will started "Turn the Platter,"

and when we had had enough of that game we played "Open the Gate," and "We are three Gentlemen out of Spain" and "Oats, pease, beans," and some other old games quite as delightful and thrilling.

Suddenly we heard a bell tingle. "Down, youngsters!" shouted uncle Will. So, laughing, crowding, half-wild with expectation, we children huddled together and sat down upon the carpet in front of the folding doors, while grandma and the grown folks drew their chairs up close, so as to form a big half-circle around us.

Some of the front-parlor lights were put out. Tinkle, tinkle, went the bell again, and the folding-doors flew open!

Please do not expect me to explain it. I can only tell you what we all saw with our own eyes. Right in the middle of that back-parlor was a well—a beautiful gray well, with green vines trailing around it; over it hung a lovely green canopy made of Christmas vines that trailed from the chandelier and stopping a little below, twine themselves into a fairylike roof. The lights of the crystal chandelier were sparkling all through the evergreen, and the whole room was bright. It would have seemed like a dream but for one thing: The crimson window-curtains were unlooped and pinned together in the mid-

dle, and, through an opening where they didn't quite meet, I could see the bare limbs of the apricot-tree outside.

Where was I? Oh! yes, the well. And what do you think was there besides? Why, a beautiful fairy, with glittering wings and a crown of lilies. She held a magic wand in her hand. One and all declared she was "too sweet for anything!" There was music somewhere, very soft music, that seemed to keep time with the slight flutter of the fairy's wings as she danced lightly around the well. Then she stood still and waved her wand. Out jumped a big monkey from behind the well. A live monkey, it surely was, for it gave a great, long, soft jump toward us, and then, hearing some of us scream, it jumped back, and with another leap squatted upon the curb of the well. We were a little frightened at first, but when the monkey sprang, up on the curb and made a funny bow, we all laughed and clapped our hands, and concluded it was "splendid," since grandma and the rest were close behind us.

Again the fairy, waving her wand, held it toward the well, and the music grew a little louder. At this, the monkey (he was quite big for a monkey,—about as tall as cousin Gus, and just about as slender) took hold of the fairy's wand

and began to pull. As he pulled, it grew longer and a silver cord began to come from it, until at last, when he gave it a shake, we saw that it was a silver fishing-rod with a silver line and hook. When the fairy nodded, he bobbed his head in a funny way, and, still sitting on the well-curb, cast in his line and began to fish!

In an instant he had a bite. Oh! how funny he was then!—such antics! such chattering squeaks! and such pulling! But he hadn't caught a fish at all. It was a little paper parcel, just as dry and nice as could be. He swung it from the well to the fairy, and the fairy, taking it from the hook, actually tripped with it to grandma! Grandma, very much surprised, smiled, and thanked her. By the time the fairy got back to the well, Master Monkey had another bite, and so it went on—the music, the glittering lights, the monkey-fisherman with his comical motions and wonderful luck, the fairy tripping in with parcels, until every one in the room had received a Christmas gift. Even Robert, Catharine, and the maids, who stood just inside the door, soon were enriched with parcels which they accepted gratefully, but, for manners' sake, did not attempt to open. Then Master Monkey, finding he couldn't get any more bites, and going through a great many antics at the discovery,

finally turned a somersault, and plunged into the beautiful well.

Then the doors closed, the front parlor grew lighter and lighter, and then we all began to examine our parcels.

"With Grandma's love. Merry Christmas," was written on each; and as soon as we could, with every one crowding about her, we kissed and thanked her, and looked at our own beautiful presents, and at each other's, exclaiming: "Oh! oh!" or "How pretty!" "Aren't you delighted?" Isn't that lovely?" until we had to sit down and rest.

By that time, Gus, Allen, and little Mary came in. There was a parcel for each on the pianoforte. When I told the three how very sorry we were that they had missed seeing the wonderful well, and the fairy and the monkey, and asked them where they had been all the time, they laughed.

"Oh, we've been having fun, too," they said—and then their eyes grew round and more sparkling over their newly-opened parcels.

Next, there was another merry game, and another, and father told the company a funny story that made everybody laugh. Finally, we children formed ourselves into a double line, "sort o' curved" as Charley said, and sang an old

Christmas carol that had been taught us on purpose to surprise grandma :

Oh ! all the bells on earth shall ring
Oh Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas day in the morning.

All the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
All the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas day in the morning.

Soon after this, we all kissed grandma and thanked her, over and over, for our beautiful time and the lovely gifts ; then we bade one another good-by ; and I saw mother and some of the others whispering things to grandma that made her look very happy, and yet as if she had half a mind to cry.

Then, muffled and bundled to the chin, we soon felt the clear, frosty night-air blowing in our faces, and so—we all went homeward, under the Christmas stars.

DICK AND THE BANTAMS.

ON Easter eve, when we younger folk were talking together, one of the big boys chanced to mention that he had fired a pistol at a cat that very afternoon. Immediately two gushing young creatures gave a shriek of horror, and declared that the murder of the poor cat was "cruel," "shameful," and "outrageous!"

I thought so, too, until the supposed murderer explained that his bullet had hit a fence about six feet from his intended victim, and that he had rejoiced over his bad aim ever since.

During the laugh that followed, I noticed that our friend, Mr. Carter, did not join heartily in the merriment. In fact, his face soon grew clouded, and his thoughts evidently were busy elsewhere. After a moment he turned to me and said:

"I have been thinking of something I did long ago. It troubles me even now, when I am reminded of it."

"Judging from your remorseful manner," I

said, "it must have been even a worse deed than Frank's attempt at cat-killing."

"It was," he replied; "shall I tell you all about it."

"Oh—do!" I exclaimed; and all the children echoed "Oh, do!"

"Well," resumed Mr. Carter. "Why not? I was a little fellow then, and yet big enough to be allowed the use of a gun occasionally. I had a pet cat, named Dick, a superb creature, large, sleek, and glossy, who loved me, and would follow me like a dog. Dick was so good and faithful that mother could leave the dairy door open without any fear that he would disturb the milk temptingly displayed in the rows of shining pans. He sometimes would look wistfully in at the door, as she stood pouring the milk from the bright pails, and when accidentally a white splash fell to the ground, he would leap to the spot and lick up every drop, considering the affair, no doubt, in the light of a reward for his honesty.

"Dick had big claws for neighboring cats, and even our dog Pompey had felt their sharpness; but my baby-sister and I could tumble him about for an hour without ever getting a scratch, so kind and gentle was he to those who loved and cared for him, though I know we

sometimes gave him pretty rough play. It was astonishing how much Dick knew. If a stray robin or sparrow perched upon our fence, it was as much as its life was worth for Dick to get a look at it; and yet he would play in the barn yard all the morning and never touch one of the little bantams.

“Those little bantams—how I did love them! If there was any thing in the world I liked as well as Dick, it was those soft, beautiful little bantams. There were six in all, and every one of them had its name. There was Jenny, speckled and saucy, with the daintiest little white pantalets in the world; then little Dicky, named after the cat, because its feathers were just the color of Dicky’s head; and Sickly, who was feeble, and didn’t seem to enjoy life as his brothers and sisters did; and Snowdrop, who hadn’t a black or gray feather on him; and Funny, who tumbled about like a little clown; and last of all, the Prodigal Son, so called because I noticed he strayed off every pleasant day, but was glad enough to come trotting home again whenever it was dark or rainy.

“Every day Dick and I would go up to the barn; he to look for rats and mice among the rafters, and I to scatter the crumbly mush for

Jenny, Dicky, Sicky, Snowdrop, Funny, and the Prodigal Son. It was great fun to see them tumble over each other in their haste to pick up the yellow crumbs. I used to take especial pains that Sicky should get his full share. As for the Prodigal Son, I usually let him take his chances, and sometimes laughed to see him waddling in from under the fence after the meal was all eaten.

“One day when, as usual, he came home tired and weary, I saw the old hen comfort him with a plump worm, and I couldn’t help joking with Dick about it.

“ ‘Dick,’ said I, ‘isn’t he absurd?’ ”

“Dick only said ‘Me-ow;’ but he looked as if he understood me. All at once he made a motion, as if to say, ‘If you wish me to do it, master, I’ll swallow the little rascal for you; but I called him back fiercely, and gave him to understand that when my bantams needed punishing I would attend to it myself.

“About a week after that, I had an unhappy day. I had been late at breakfast, and had neglected to feed my bantams. In school, I missed my lessons, was saucy to the teacher, and in consequence was ‘kept in.’ By the time I reached home, feeling very cross and ill-natured indeed, mother met me at the gate.

“ ‘Henry,’ said she, ‘you left some weeds on the garden path yesterday. Please take them all away as soon as you have eaten your dinner.’

“Mother was always so kind that I answered, ‘yes, mother,’ as cheerfully as I could. During dinner, however, I vented all my ill-nature upon Pompey and the baby (Dick was not in the room, or I might have acted unkindly even to him). In two minutes after I had seated myself, Pompey was whining pitifully under the table, and I was calling out lustily, while the baby pulled at the table-cloth, and looked up at me with great wondering eyes;—

“ ‘Rosy, I think you might come and take Baby away. How can I eat my dinner with half a dozen young ones around?’ ”

“ ‘Arrah!’ retorted Norah the housemaid, hurrying in from the kitchen and snatching the baby from the floor, ‘where’s yer countin,’ Misther Hennerly? Blamin’ one poor blissed little crayture, unless its yerself, indade, sir, that’s as cross as six!’ ”

“This didn’t put me in any better humor, so I sulked through my dinner, and, after that, pitched the poor withered weeds into the pig-pen as savagely as if they had been the cause of all the day’s mishaps. The next things to

be attended to were my poor neglected bantams. I knew that John, our colored man, was too kind-hearted not to have fed them in my absence, but I felt sure they had missed me for all that.

“ ‘Dick! Dick! Here, Dick!’ I called.

“Dick did not come leaping toward me as usual. “Where is he!” I wondered. Calling him two or three times in vain, I went alone to visit my pets, trying all the while to subdue the great lump of ill-nature that kept rising in my throat.

“Arriving at the barn-yard what a sight presented itself! There lay Jenny, Sickly, and the Prodigal Son upon the hard ground, *dead!* And under the shed sat Dick, deliberately pulling to pieces the body of poor little Snowdrop!

“Almost blinded with passion, I seized a rope that lay near me, and resolved to deal full vengeance upon him.

“ ‘He has killed my poor bantams,’ I thought, ‘and he must die himself. It is only *justice*.’

Dick didn’t try to get away from me at all. He only rubbed his head against my knee and purred while I put the rope around his neck. I would have hung him in my rage, but he looked up at me so earnestly I could not do it. Resolved, however that *justice* should be done,

I tied him to a tree and rushed to the house for my gun. I loaded it, and hurried back. I could hear Dick crying piteously, as he tugged at the rope.

“Steeling myself against him, I raised the gun and fired.

Dick was quiet enough then, poor fellow !

“Just at that moment John called to me from the field—

“‘What yer bin shootin’ at, Massa Henry? A weasel?’

“I couldn’t tell him; so I shouted back in reply—

“‘I’ve not seen any weasel.’

“‘Hain’t you?’ answered John, leaning on his scythe. Well, I killed one early dis mornin’, but I didn’t know till arterwards what he’d bin a-doin’. He’d bin a-killin’ most all ob your bantams, Massa Harry—dat’s a fac’, he had.’

“I didn’t wait to hear any more, but rushed into the barn-yard. With an aching heart I lifted my dead birds one by one. There on each little throat, was the fatal sign of the weasel—a small hole, through which the warm life-blood had been drawn. I picked up Snowdrop just where poor Dick had dropped him when I dragged him away. *The hole was in Snowdrop’s neck too.*

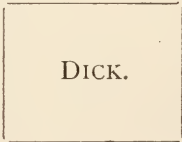
"I sank upon a stone and cried bitterly. Dick dear faithful Dick, had been eating the *dead* bird even while the live ones, Funny and Dicky, had been chirping at his feet.

"It was too late to recall my deed—my act of supposed justice—now.

"With many a sob and resolve never to be passionate again, I buried poor Dick under the rose-bush in my garden, and near him, beneath the lilac-tree, I laid my bantams.

"It was a long time ago ; but when I went back to the old homestead last summer, I stole alone to a thicket of tangled rose-bushes near the fence.

"I parted the branches, and far down among them I could see the great round stone I had placed there years ago. It was green and moldy, but I could trace out the name my boyish hand had chiseled upon it—"



DICK.

All of the little company, old and young, had been listening to Mr. Carter, and when he ceased

speaking no one cared to break the silence for a moment.

At last I asked the little Kate if she understood what "justice" meant.

"Course I do," she replied promptly; "it means shootin' cats."

"Oh, no, Katy," said Eddie; "it means *don't punish until you find out*."

"That is something like it," I replied; "but you must remember that justice does not always punish—sometimes it rewards."

"Anyhow," chimed in Charley, "it doesn't mean the same as *revenge*—does it Mr. Carter?"

CUSHAMEE:

OR

THE BOY'S WALK

YOUNG folks, little or big, hearken to the story of Lulu and Thomas Laffer!

In a pleasant country room, striped with deepening shade and setting-sunlight, a little girl lately sat talking with two dear friends—her cat and her doll.

She was rocking on a pretty wicker chair; the cat lay at her feet listening.

This girl was Lulu Laffer.

“Dear little Cushamee—precious little Cushamee,” she said, hugging the doll tightly, “what are you looking at with your big blue eyes?”

“Mam-ma!” cried Cushamee, who was a talking doll.

“Oh! Pussy, did you hear that? She spoke without my touching the wires at all—at least if I touched them I didn’t know it.”

Most persons would have declared that Pussy only said, "Mieow!" But Lulu had not been long enough in the world to have her ears dulled; and so she heard the rest of the cat's answer quite distinctly.

"That's a fine doll, Lulu; I only wish my kittens could speak as plainly. Put her down here, do, and let me tumble her about awhile."

"No indeed you sha'n't, Pussy. Lie still, and behave yourself. Do you want to see me shut her eyes, Pussy?"

Pussy winked, as if to say—"You *can't* do it?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Lulu, "you shall see!"—and the doll's bright eyes were closed in a twinkling.

"Now go-sleepy, Cushamee—and I'll sing to you—

By! by!
Never fear—
Mamma's watching
Baby dear."

"Pa-pa," cried the doll, in a whining voice, without opening its eyes.

"Oh!" screamed Lulu, almost throwing Cushamee down, "I *declare* I didn't touch the wire then! Isn't it strange?"

"Nonsense!" Pussy, blinking, seemed to answer. "When you pat her you move the wires without knowing it, Now don't talk to me any more—I'm sleepy."

Lulu rocked softly and quietly, singing—to no particular tune—

"Cushamee, Cushamee!
Pussy won't speak to me!
Go-sleepy, Cushamee—"

Just then a terrible pair of boots sprang into the room. Lulu's brother Tom was in them. Puss rose slowly writing an S in the air with her tail, while she glared at Tom with green eyes.

"Ha! ha!" shouted a voice that seemed to come out of the boots; "I've been listening to you, Miss Lulu. Ha! ha! Big thing on dolls, —ha! ha!"

Lulu hugged Cushamee more tightly than ever, and told Tom to "go away."

"Stiss-s! you great ugly stone-thrower, you!" hissed the cat (but Tom could not understand her); "go away! stiss-s!" Thereupon Tom treated Pussy to a song—dancing around her as he sang, bowing and scraping at the end of every line—

“ A cat came fiddling out over a farm,
With a pair of bagpipes under his arm ;
He could sing nothing but fiddle-cum-fee,
The mouse has married the bumble-bee,
Pipe—cat—bee—mouse—
Who'll go quickest out of the house ? ”

With these last words, came a kick from the boots—Puss cried pitifully as she limped away.

Lulu, hoping to touch Tom's feelings, pulled the wires slyly.

“ Mam-ma—Pap-pa,” cried the doll, opening its big blue eyes.

Tom sneered.

“ Ha ! ha ! ‘ Cushamee,’ indeed ! Call *that* saying ‘ papa’ and ‘ mamma ’—do you ? And when the wax balls roll over, you call it ‘ shutting its eyes’—do you ? Talking to the cat, too, like a little goose—Lulu, you're a baby ! ”

“ I'm not a baby ! ” retorted Lulu, ready to sob : “ I'm a little girl. You're a baby yourself.”

“ Yes,” pursued Tom, planting himself before her in a tantalizing way. “ When you see me rocking dolls and talking to cats, I *will* be a baby—I own it. Why don't you go out-doors and play ? ”

“ I have been out playing nearly all day,” answered Lulu, wiping her eyes ; “ and oh,

Tommy, what do you think! my walking-doll went alone, all the way down the brick walk, and—"

"There you are again, you naughty child! always talking about dolls—"

"Oh, Tom! that isn't naughty; quarreling is naughty, and disobedience, and such things, but—"

"I tell you it is!" roared Tom furiously; "I'll smash their ugly little heads, if you don't stop it. Pshaw! I didn't mean to make you cry. Girls *are* babies, anyhow! Before I'd be a girl, I'd—"

"Meow!" suggested Pussy—stealing into the room.

"Yes, I'd meow! Ha! ha! that's pretty good! I was going to say—before I'd be a girl, I'd be a—"

"Pap-pa!" squeaked the doll, for Lulu was patting it now, in great agitation.

Tom, in quite a "temper," declared the room was bewitched. Just as he was about to finish his sentence the supper-bell rang. He rushed down stairs, intent on begging for at least six pieces of gingerbread.

Lulu followed, and, after putting Pussy's supper on the hearth, she sat down, meekly, beside her brother.

This was Thomas Laffer.

That night he chuckled, as he pulled off his boots. "Ha! ha! I think I've shamed Lulu pretty well out of it by this time. Such nonsense—pooh! If I were king, I'd cut off the head of every doll in the land; or else I'd fire all the girls. They're not much use, anyhow;" and Tom, jumping into his night-clothes, scampered across the room. He had intended to stand upon his head, and throw his feet against the wall, just before he sprang into bed; instantly he stopped short, screaming,

"Oh, oh! Come, quick—mo-ther!"

His mother ran in. "What *is* the matter, dear?"

"Oh, ho, boo—hoo! I've run a needle, or something, into my foot!"

True enough, it was a needle. Lulu was called. She held a light and cried for "poor Tom," while the mother fumbled at the twitching foot.

"There, Tom—it's out!" cried the mother, delighted. "Now, go to bed at once; and don't play about the room with bare feet."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Tom, quite subdued.

For hours afterwards he lay tossing and turn-

ing upon his cot. Every one else in the house was asleep. Only the distant barking of dogs could be heard. The moon was bright and round; and restless frogs were jumping in the shadows of the garden.

"Pap-pa!" squeaked a voice close by Tom's ear.

He started up—"Who calls?" said he.

"*I* call," answered the voice, "Cushamee. Get up!"

Tom shivered, and strove to wake his mother, who slept in the next room; but his voice failed every time he tried to scream or to utter her name.

"Get up!" repeated the voice, sternly.

Tom tried to lie still, but could not. He slid slowly out of the bed, not daring to lift his eyes.

"Come with me," said Cushamee.

How dreadfully her feet sounded upon the floor! They creaked, they rattled and clicked, jerking her forward with a strange motion. But they never stopped, and Tom was forced to follow. On they went, out in the hall; down the stairway; into the garden—every blade of grass pricked Tom's bare feet, just as the needle did,—still he could not stop.

At last they paused by the garden brook.

In an instant slimy things crawled and sprawled over him from head to foot, spluttering in his ears; trailing over his eyes; sliding up and down his cheek, neck, legs, and arms; wriggling and twisting in his hair.

"Oh!" he cried, shuddering, "what are these?"

"Nothing," said Cushamee, rolling her great eyes at him, "nothing but the frogs and harmless creatures you have tortured. Begin with his arms and legs now, my good fellows, and see how he likes it?"

"Murder! murder!" roared Tom. "Oh, Cushamee, I'll never do it again! Murder, murder! they're killing me!"

"Gluck!" muttered an old toad, near his ear; "bite away, comrades, he hasn't any feeling—it doesn't hurt him a bit; the idea of an animal that can't jump the length of his own body, feeling any pain, is absurd."

"Help! help!" screamed Tom.

Cushamee held up her hand. "There, that will do! Jump back into the water, my friends, You have worried him enough for the present. We have other work to do to-night."

Next she rattled on towards the well. Tom, trembling with fear, ventured to glance at her in the moonlight. She looked just as she did

while in Lulu's arms, except that she was larger, whiter, and had a fierce look in her rolling eyes. Her feet were different ; but that was because she had on a pair of shoes such as the walking dolls wear.

On the curb of the well sat two kittens and an old cat.

"Here he is," said Cushamee sharply ; "do your duty."

The kittens glared at him, but seemed to have no other life. The old cat sprang upon his head, and at a command from Cushamee the creature seized him and began to slide with him down into the well. Instantly the two kittens tumbled after her and clung to Tom's neck. Down, down, they all went, all struggled in the black water, rising to the surface, and the old cat and the dreadful kittens pulled him under again every time.

"Don't let him go, children !" hissed the cat ; "he drowned you, and now you just show him how it feels ; you can't hurt him much, to be sure, for how can an animal who can't see in the dark, and never eats mice, have any feeling ?"

"Help !" gasped Tom, the last time he arose. "Help I say !"

"Take hold of the well-rope," commanded Cushamee's voice, coldly.

He obeyed, and something drew him upward—the old cat trying to pull him back with her sharp claws, as he rose hand over hand. Faint and dripping, he stood once more upon the ground. Cushamee motioned him to follow her. After a long tramp she halted. The songs of birds filled the air; they came nearer and nearer, and hovered over his head; each bird gave a shrill cry as it saw him.

As Tom looked up he noticed in the clear moonlight that each one held between its feet a stone nearly as big as its body.

“These are the birds you have frightened and pelted,” said Cushamee; “they will show you how stones feel.”

“Tu whoo! whoo!” screeched an old owl, perched near by; “fire away! He can’t suffer though, for how can an animal without wings have any feeling?”

Instantly the stones began to rain upon Tom.

In vain he bent and wriggled and groaned—every one hit him upon a tender spot. Soon owls, squirrels, and hosts of little creatures joined in the attack.

“Take that!” they hooted and squealed, “and that—and that!”

Bruised, bleeding, half mad with pain, Tom cried in vain for mercy. Not until the birds,

growing weary, flew away, one by one, did the storm of stones grow less. Finally, Cushamee clattered forward again, drawing him after her as by some invisible cord.

"Oh, stop!" cried Tom at last; "I cannot walk, the sand's so soft; I'm sinking; sinking!"

"Crawl in there," commanded Cushamee, pointing to a hole in the ground.

Tom was forced to obey. He soon found himself in a smoothly finished cavern—not very large; but he was glad enough to sit down there and rest his bruised, aching body.

He could not see Cushamee, but after a moment, he heard her voice saying, "Ants, do your duty; show him how it feels to have one's house trampled down over one's head."

"We know him," buzzed a great chorus; "he has destroyed our cities many a time."

Tom sprang up, but it was too late; the sand was already tumbling upon him; down came the walls, rumbling, rushing like a sea of gravel; the roof was falling! He gasped, struggled, and tried in vain to call for help. For a while his sufferings were fearful, but Cushamee had not done with him yet. Soon the mountain of sand seemed to roll off his body, and he found himself once more beside the terrible doll.

Scarcely able to walk, he felt compelled to follow her. At last, he sank upon the grass from sheer exhaustion. Clatter, clatter, click, click, came back the feet, and Cushamee's white face leaned over him. She had grown to a prodigious size, and her eyes rolled and glared at him with savage ferocity.

"Get up!" she shrieked, shaking him with her great wooden arms; "get up! I have not done with you yet."

"I can't," he moaned; "I am almost dead."

"Get up, you cruel boy!" and she shook him until his very bones seemed to crack; "I'll teach you to call playing with dolls 'naughty.' I'll teach you to laugh at the innocent sport of little girls!"

At this, hundreds of bells began to toll mournfully, as for his funeral.

"Mercy, mercy!" he sobbed.

"No mercy for *you*!" yelled Cushamee, tumbling him about as a tiger would a kitten; "no mercy for *you*, you great toad-killing, kitten-drowning, bird-stoning, ant-mashing young villain! Playing with dolls is naughty, is it? —s'-c-a-t—" and, with one tremendous push, she sent him rolling down the hill.

The shock made him open his eyes; he

found himself sitting upon the floor in his night-clothes! He actually had tumbled out of his bed. The breakfast-bell was ringing savagely. And Bridget was pounding at his door.

"Get up, Masther Tom," she cried in subdued tones of wrath. "If I haven't shuk this bell till the arms is most off of me, and not a word would you say, only moanin' an' ——"

"Tommy! come down—griddle-cakes!" called Lulu's clear, cheery voice from the stairway—"griddle-cakes and maple-syrup—come down, quick!"

As Tom jerked his jacket on, he muttered wearily to himself:

"Well, I'm mighty glad it wasn't real, anyhow."

Lulu has had fine times ever since that morning. Tom always tries to be kind to her, and he never thinks of laughing at her dolls. Indeed he really looks quite solemn whenever Cushamee says "Pap-pa!"

ALL IN A DAY.

IF it had been any one else, it would not have seemed so strange. But Johnny was the life of the house. Johnny's laugh, Johnny's quick step through the hall, Johnny's terrific rush down-stairs that always made grandma drop her knitting with a startled "Oh-h!" Johnny's ringing voice, Johnny's odd mishaps, Johnny's comical, provoking, astonishing ways,—why home wouldn't be home at all without them!

So everyone in the house felt; especially when, one day, all these things suddenly ceased, and Johnny lay on the sofa insensible. It seemed as if there were nothing bright left in the whole world; for was not Johnny lying there, looking as if he never could waken—Johnny, who wouldn't open his eyes even for Baby-Nannie, beg as hard as she would, though all the time the little girl half-believed he would jump up with a "Boo!" and make them all laugh?

This is what had happened :

Early on that same morning Johnny had gone out-of-doors, intent upon training his dog Nero to draw his new wagon. The wagon was a fine affair, large enough to hold a small boy ; but the harness wasn't much—just a piece of old clothes-line and some leather straps, though it would do very well to begin with. The grand old dog, never suspecting, came bounding toward Johnny at the first whistle, but he didn't like the harness at all.

" You stupid ! " laughed Johnny, tugging at the buckles, as he tried to hitch the puzzled Nero to the shafts. " Don't you want to be a horse ? Be quiet, sir ! (O bother ! stop jerking. There ! you're harnessed at last. Now, let's see you travel ! "

Nero ran a short distance, turned about to see what was the matter, upset the wagon, and, tucking his tail wretchedly between his legs, sneaked off toward his kennel, dragging the capsized wagon after him.

" Whoa ! Whoa ! " cried Johnny. " Come back here. Whoa ! Wait till I set up the wagon, can't you ? Whoa ! Whoa, now, old fellow ! Guess I'll jump in. Now, sir, go long ! "

Off started Nero again. The ground was smooth and hard, and Johnny's weight not

enough to hinder such a big dog. His two little sisters, running after the wagon, thought they never in all their lives had seen anything so fine.

"He tan dallop just like a horsey, tan't he, Bertha?" panted little Nannie.

"Yes, indeed, he can!" replied Bertha, all excitement. "Hold your lines tight, Johnny!"

"You bet!" shouted Johnny, looking back. "Isn't he great!"

Johnny didn't care to say that Nero paid no sort of heed to the lines. It was glory enough that the girls should *think* he really guided his animal.

"Oh! don't go down there! Don't!" suddenly screamed Bertha.

The young man did not answer. He was going very fast now. The wagon bumped about considerably. Nero was running as hard as he could down the slope that led into a hollow place where the men had been digging. It was to be an underground ice-house, reaching a little way into the hill.

"Whoa! Whoa!" shouted Johnny; but he might just as well have said, "Go! Go!" for all Nero cared.

Soon they were in the deepest part of the excavation, where the hill-side had been dug away

a little, so as to form a rough wall. Nero ran to this spot as if attracted by the coolness of the damp, shady ground ; there he very deliberately upset the wagon, and lay down to enjoy himself.

"Well, if you're not the funniest old horse that ever I saw !" laughed Johnny, jumping up and knocking the red clay from his clothes. "What brought you down here, I wonder !"

Nero did not answer. He seemed inclined to take a nap.

"Now, sir," continued Johnny, setting up the wagon again and taking his seat, "we'll start fresh. Let's see if you can pull up hill."

Nero was a mule now instead of a horse. The more Johnny pulled and coaxed and scolded, the more motionless and resolute old Nero grew.

"I know !" cried Johnny, jumping out at last ; "I'll just run up and shake a little of that loose earth down on the old lazy-bones. *That* will start him."

Up he ran to where an overhanging ledge of sod projected over Nero and the wagon. It was a more dangerous place than he knew, for the soil had fallen away from beneath, and a very large piece of the edge was ready to tumble at the slightest disturbance. He intended only

to stamp off a few lumps of soil with his heel, but alas!—

Well might the little girls run to the house, screaming for help. Johnny had fallen, and with him so much earth that Nero and the wagon were completely hidden! Johnny rolled and bounced down to the bottom of the excavation where his head hit heavily against a jutting rock.

The poor boy was picked up insensible and carried into the house. When one of the men afterward went back to the hollow to look for Nero, he felt so anxious about Johnny, it seemed to him of very little consequence that he found the dog buried under the dirt, quite cold and stiff.

“Arrah! it’s buried I might better have left ye, ye poor baste, for it’s dead enough ye are,” he said. “Bad luck to this lumberin’ wagon that kept ye from freein’ yersel’ till the breath was out of ye!”

So saying he cut away the harness from poor Nero, and hastened back to the kitchen.

“Och! bad luck to ye, Mike!” sobbed the cook, who had been howling behind her apron ever since she saw Johnny carried in. “Couldn’t ye mind the blessed child better ner that? Ah! but it’s kilt he is, the poor bhoy!”

"Sorra a bit kilt," exclaimed Mike earnestly ; "there's niver a bone broken in him. It's only knocked spacheless he was, wid the fall."

"Och, much ye know about it," moaned the cook.

Just then Bertha rushed in, clapping her hands joyfully, though her cheeks were wet with tears.

"Oh! he's awake! Johnny's awake!" she cried. "He's sitting up on the sofa almost well, and he wants to know about Nero."

"The dog's kilt, clane kilt intirely," said Mike, shaking his head sadly. "Och! but the poor bhoy'll take it hard!"

Bertha heard no more. She ran up to the drawing-room where the family were gathered around Johnny, and whispered something to her father,—something that Johnny heard, for with a sharp cry he fell over, and hid his face in the sofa-cushions.

Poor Johnny! He was not seriously injured. He had a lump on his head, that was all. In less than an hour he was able to sit up by the table and look at pictures. No, not look at them exactly, but *try* to do so, for the doctor had said he must not cry. In vain Bertha brought the prettiest book she had; in vain little Nannie comforted him in her sweet, child-

ish way. Every few moments he would push aside the pictures, and leaning his bandaged head on his hand, say with quivering lip, while his eyes filled with tears: "Nero! poor old Nero! *I* killed him!"

What sound was that on the gravel-walk? What was Mike saying about its being "only sinseless the poor baste must a' bin"? What was coming panting up the stair, in response to papa's whispered coaxing? What—

Why, it was Nero! Nero, tottering feebly and dingy with dirt, but Nero still. No one could doubt that. He was too weak a dog to have three children hugging him at such a rate; yet he must have liked it, for he whined with joy and wagged his tail with as much spirit as any dog could have been expected to show under the circumstances.

And the very next day, Johnny went back to his old ways again!

A DOLL'S PARTY.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

NO boys admitted to this story. It is expressly for girls. I wish to tell the little ladies of something that lately took place at a lovely home in this city ; and if they are not delighted to hear of it, it will be because they have not the right motherly feeling for their dolls, but are willing to have them moping at home while they, the mammas, are off on a frolic.

There is a bright little girl living up town, whom her friends call "Pussy;" not because she has whiskers, or is apt to scratch, but because she is so frolicsome, and quick, and affectionate ; and, above all, because they love her so much, that any ordinary name—such as Mary, Alice, or Julia—wouldn't suit their purpose at all.

Well, Pussy has a doll, or, rather, an adopted daughter from Paris, named Marie, who, of course, can't speak our language yet, but is so gentle and stylish that Pussie is very fond of her. Marie is very good, too, about sitting

down—which is a great virtue in dolls—and, instead of sticking her arms out, like a pair of dividers, she allows them to be folded quite gracefully, which also is a quality that cannot be too highly commended. In view of these excellent traits, Pussy feels that she cannot do too much to promote her doll's happiness. Consequently, Marie has the finest, daintiest dresses that can be made; not basted together in the disgraceful way that the clothes of many poor dolls are sewn, but every stitch has been taken with care. Her underskirts, night-gowns,—in fact, all her clothes—are made in the most complete manner possible. Her stockings are as perfect as Pussy's own, and her tiny shoes would do credit to any shoemaker in town. Of course, she has an opera-cloak, and a dress bonnet, and a parasol, for French dolls cannot possibly do without such things, and Pussy is not one to let her adopted daughter want for anything. Marie has also many other advantages which dolls whose hearts are made of ordinary bran rarely enjoy. Last week her mamma and grandmamma planned a great surprise for her. They gave her a day party, and invited all the nice dolls of her acquaintance to attend. The invitations were issued in fine style; and, as dolls are apt to feel awkward and

embarrassed in going out alone, each one was allowed to bring her mother with her.

The mothers all were less than eleven years of age, and of course were very glad to see the fun. At two o'clock the party assembled, and quite a brilliant affair it was, I assure you. Every doll had on her finest things, and her hair had been dressed with care. Probably they had looked rather queer during the morning, all bristling with curl-papers and crinkling pins, (and so perhaps had a few of the mammas, for that matter), but everything was right, now; even the celebrated Flora McFlimsy would have been delighted with their appearance. I am happy to say, also, that the dolls acted charmingly. They all sat down in the most approved style: held their handkerchiefs and fans (those who had them) as well as one could expect; kept up a pleasant, lady-like smile the entire afternoon; and never once sulked, or begged to go home, or made any naughty speeches.

Of course, the young mammas had a grand time comparing their daughters and talking over their own family affairs—sometimes dancing, and sometimes playing merry games, by way of amusing Marie's friends, who, being so lately from Paris, did not know the ways of the country sufficiently to join in. All the mam-

mas insisted that Marie was the loveliest doll of all; but Pussy would not hear of such a thing. While they were discussing these family matters very softly, so that the dolls could not hear the compliments paid (for all agreed that "of all things a vain little doll was the worst"), supper-time arrived. A spirited march sprang to life from a piano behind the palms, and, to its music, twenty little girls, bearing twenty beautiful dolls, marched in joyous procession to the feast prepared for them,—the crowning point of the whole affair.

When the dining-room curtains swung aside a pretty scene was disclosed, bright with candles and flowers. Upon the center of the long oval table was a much smaller table of the same shape, and around it waited twenty little golden chairs.

Before supper was announced, Pussy's own mother had, with Pussy's assistance, placed a rosebud and a little card at the plate of each young mamma. These cards, with the names on them, made it quite easy for each guest not only to take the place assigned her, but also to understand why her dolly was now taken from her and given a seat at the little table of honor—the table of the dolls. There it stood, spread in fine style for the dollies, while the mammas

sat around the large table at which Pussy presided with pretty dignity.

Then you should have heard the exclamations of delight when each mother realized that her own dear doll was right before her—where she could see that the child was conducting itself properly, and, of all things, not lolling in its chair.

Everything on the small table was on a tiny scale: plates, cups, saucers, tumblers, spoons, knives, forks, and napkins. Then there were wee biscuit, and miniature birds and salads, and little pyramids of ice-cream, and little dishes of confection, and the cunningest mottoes that you ever saw. Then there were iced-cakes, that your brother could have eaten in a mouthful; in short, everything was just dainty enough for a fairy. Of course, the mammas had fine things to eat, too; and they did justice to the repast, I assure you. In fact, they all had far better appetites than their dolls, who just sat and stared at the good things, too delighted to eat at all.

After supper, the mammas and dolls adjourned to the drawing-room, where they enjoyed themselves finely. I forgot to mention that there was just one young gentleman of the party, who came in late, a very young gentleman,

Pussy's brother, who nevertheless became of instant importance when a dance was proposed. At the first tingling of the music, his sister slid up to him, and begged him to dance with her. "Oh, *do*, Roddy!" she pleaded; "just once."

"Can't do it," said Roddy, drawing himself up with great dignity; "there isn't time."

"What *do* you mean, Roddy?"

"Why," returned Roddy, taking one glance at several bright-eyed little girls unconsciously waiting for him, "I don't want to dance with anybody. I must go!"

This scattered the girls, and the little man was seen no more that afternoon.

Then the girls danced with one another, or perhaps their own dolls, and all galloped gracefully up and down the fine room, to the tune of "Pop goes the weasel."

Next came a quiet little game which allowed the guests to cool off and rest before it was time to go home. Then such a commotion as there was in the dressing-room, putting on hats and cloaks. The dolls, too, required to be properly arrayed in their "street-things," and the mammas had to bid their hostess and Marie, and one another, "good-bye."

Finally, at precisely half-past five, the last doll was carried out, the last carriage rolled away—and the party was over.

LEARNING BY HEART.

"WHAT Bible verse do you say this morning, Nelly?" asked Mrs. Davis of her young daughter, one fine day last Summer.

Nelly started in trepidation, as she answered—

"Oh! I don't know it yet, mother, and it's almost school time. It's a beautiful verse from Paul's Epistle to the Romans—something about "loving each other";" adding, as she opened her Testament, where a bright blue book-mark divided the pages, "Here it is! Jenny Scott has the same verse, I remember"—and Nelly read aloud:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."

Mrs. Davis happening to leave the room an instant afterward, Nelly went on repeating the words two or three times, without looking from the book. At length, her little brother Charley put his curly head in at the doorway just as she

was repeating, for the fourth time, "Be kindly affec—"

"Nelly ! Nelly !" he shouted. "Come, harness my horsey for me. You said you would do it after breakfast."

"Oh, Charley, do go away," answered Nelly, petulantly. "Don't you see I'm studying?" and she resumed the verse.

"Be kindly af—" and once more a voice, not at the door, but in Nelly's own heart, interrupted her. "*Am* I 'kindly affectioned'?" it asked.

"Certainly," answered another voice, also within. "I love Charley dearly; but then he always plagues me just when I'm studying."

"Be kindly affectioned," resumed Nelly, aloud, "one to another with brotherly love—one to another with brotherly love—in honor pre—I declare, Charley, you're real naughty to bother me so. I'll tell mother if you don't go away this instant!" she exclaimed quickly, as Master Charles slipped once more into the room, and coaxingly presented his toy-horse and wagon.

Charley did not answer, but sat down on the floor beside her, and tried to arrange the complicated little harness himself.

"Oh, do stop your fumbling!" cried Nelly, now really irritated by Charley's atrocious conduct. "I don't believe there ever was such a boy for teasing. Why *can't* you go down stairs?"

"'Cause I don't want to," returned Charley, promptly. "You're an old, naughty Nelly, *you* are; you're b-a-a-d," and his pent-up tears began to flow in earnest.

"Nelly! Nelly!" whispered the voice again, "Charley's copying your own temper;" but she did not listen to it very attentively. How could she when she had the verse to learn?

Finally, after studying it a little more, she seized her books and hat, and moved toward the door.

"You're ba-ad," sobbed Charley, looking up at her, his little face flushed, and an angry light in his swimming eyes.

Nelly glanced at him for an instant, and would have hurried out into the street, had not something in her heart rebuked her.

"Poor Charley!" she thought, "it's all my fault. I've not been 'kindly affectioned' toward him at all."

She knelt down beside him, kissed his hot cheek, and said, gently:

"No, no, Charley dear, sister don't want to be bad; only she's in a great hurry this morn-

ing. I love little Charley very much—won't that do?"

"No!" said the young man sturdily, but in a softer tone; "I want my horse harnessed."

"Well," answered Nelly, checking her impatience, and sitting down on the floor beside him, as she lifted up the horse and wagon, "I will harness it for you; but won't Charley be sorry for poor sister Nelly if she goes late to school, and gets bad marks!"

Charley was too young to go to school, but he had sometimes heard Nelly speak of bad marks, and had a vague idea that they were something very much to be dreaded; besides, Nelly's altered manner had softened him wonderfully. He put his arms about her neck, and said:

"Go to school quick, Nelly! I'll put horsey in his stable till you come back."

"No, you needn't, darling," laughed his sister, as she adjusted the last strap. "See he's all harnessed. Kiss, Nelly; and now, ar'n't you sorry you were naughty?"

"Yes," answered the little fellow, solemnly. And the next moment Nelly was half-way down the stairs, smiling to herself as she heard his joyous "Whoa! Go 'long" in the upper hall.

"It is better to be 'kindly affectionate one to another,'" thought the happy girl, as she hastened on her way to school, "and I do hope I'll never forget the verse. 'In honor preferring one another,' that will be harder to do; for everybody wants to take the best chance in this world, Aunt Emmy says; but I'll try to do right indeed I will.

And there, in the crowded street, an earnest, unuttered prayer went up from the little girl's heart, that God would help her to remember and to follow the beautiful lesson. It was but for an instant. Ere she turned the street, she was chatting in the midst of a group of school-girls; but the halo of His answer was like sunshine in her heart.

"I am so glad to meet you," said Nelly, as the girls walked on together. "I thought I was late. What's the matter, Jenny?" she whispered to the one nearest her.

"Nothing," replied Jenny. "Why? Are my eyes red?"

"Yes; just as red as—" Nelly was going to say, "as they can be," but she remembered something somebody had said to her about exaggeration, so she checked herself, and added, "as if you had been crying."

"Well, I *have* been crying like sixty, if you

want to know," rejoined the thoughtless girl; "and I'd like to know who wouldn't cry? There, mother's going to keep my sister Henrietta from school to-day, and take her on the steamboat to Staten Island, just on account of Etty's health. I coaxed her ever so hard to be allowed to go, too, but it was of no use. Henrietta's health does make me sick," added Jenny, with an air of deep disgust. "Every little thing has to be done for *her*, and nothing for me. She is just the whiningest little—"

"Oh! Jenny," interrupted Nelly, "you shouldn't talk so. You know poor Henrietta is really very delicate, and you have health and strength, and—"

"Pshaw! Don't preach!" sneered her companion. "We'll get preaching enough I warrant, when the new teacher makes one of her long speeches this morning. I can't bear her, for my part."

"Nor I, neither," said one of the girls.

"Jenny," asked Nelly suddenly, "do you know your Bible verse? We have the same one, you know."

"Certainly I do," was the reply. "I know it by heart, and all my other lessons, too."

"*By heart!*" echoed Nelly; "Oh! Jenny, I

wish we could all learn it by heart—it's a splendid verse."

"Preaching again! I declare if you ain't at it bright and early this morning," sneered Jenny, as she bounced ahead of the main group to whisper to Julia Green that Nelly Davis was "getting to be real stuck up." In a moment more the school-house was reached.

In due course of time the girls were called upon to repeat their verses. Jenny Scott stood up first, and recited hers glibly enough.

"Very well," said the new teacher, approvingly, "except that you spoke too rapidly."

Jenny returned to her seat with a satisfied swing of the skirt.

"Julia Green!" said the teacher.

Julia's verse was from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!" And she repeated it in a clear, earnest voice, that made Jenny Scott ask, in a whisper, of the girl beside her, if she didn't think Jule Green was "dreadfully affected!"

"No whispering!" exclaimed the teacher, in an austere voice.

Other girls stood up one by one and said their verses, and at last the teacher called—

“Nelly Davis!”

Poor Nelly! she had been so absorbed in thought all this time, that when her name was uttered aloud it startled her, and seemed like a response to what was going on in her own mind; for, after thinking over the events of the morning, she had asked herself—

“Oh! what *did* make me speak so crossly to poor Charley, even while my verse was before my eyes?”

“Nelly Davis!” repeated the teacher, in a tone of surprise.

Nelly blushed, and walked quickly forward; but when she should have spoken, the words fled from her. She only colored more deeply, and remained silent.

“Well,” said the teacher, encouragingly, “you surely cannot have forgotten your verse already?”

“Yes—no, ma’am—I mean,” stammered Nelly; “I thought I knew it; I *do* know it; but—”

“But what?” asked the teacher.

“The words are—oh! now I remember them,” said Nelly, with a bright smile—“Be ye kind and affectionate toward each other in brotherly love; in honor—in honor—” and she paused in despair, resuming in an instant with

some hesitation—"in honors giving way to one another."

"That is not right," said the teacher, looking rather sternly at Nelly. "You have not read it carefully. Jenny Scott will please say the verse."

Jenny obeyed promptly,

"*Very* well," said the teacher, smiling kindly upon Jenny. "*You* have studied your verse very carefully, and, for the future, I hope Nelly will follow your good example."

Nelly returned to her seat penitent and humble.

At noontime the scholars rushed gladly into the play-ground, and all felt ready to enjoy their hour of holiday to the utmost. Some jumped with skipping-ropes, some chased their wooden or iron hoops about ; two or three were vainly trying to make their roller-skates "go" on the rough flag-stones ; a few clustered about a fine swing, waiting for their "turn," and others walked in pairs with arms fondly twined about each other's waists.

"Do, Kitty, look at that fat little thing, Bertha Lee, in the corner of the piazza," said one of the girls to her companion. "I do believe she's eating her lunch yet—she is the

slowest little thing ! Before I'd use up all noon-time eating, I guess I'd know it ! ”

“ Why, no—she has just come out from the school-room,” rejoined Kitty. “ I rather think she's been kept in.”

“ Oh ! yes, now I know ; she missed her geography lesson. Wasn't it too funny ? I thought I should give up when the stupid little thing said the Mississippi River emptied into Lake Superior ”—and Jenny Scott, for it was she, laughed heartily at the recollection.

“ Yes,” returned Kitty, “ she said it in such a confident way, too ; that made it funnier. But you made a mistake, too, Jenny ; you said that St. Helena was celebrated for being the birth-place of Napoleon Bonaparte.

“ Well, what of that ? ” exclaimed Jenny, rather sharply. “ I knew it was *something* about Napoleon—didn't I ? Anybody might have made that mistake ! ”

“ Yes ; so they might,” rejoined Kitty, soothingly. “ But do look !—if there isn't Nelly Davis showing little Fatty how to study her geography lesson. She's a real good-hearted girl, anyhow.”

“ Pooh ! Nelly Davis isn't any better than other folks. But, my goodness, mustn't she have felt flat this morning about her Bible verse ?

I never saw anything so stupid ; why, she didn't know it at all. Wasn't I lucky, though ? I knew mine *perfectly*. I was glad, too, to get ahead of her for once, for I don't like her one bit lately. She's one of your sickish, good kind—always trying to be something wonderful."

Kitty felt at heart that this sort of gossip was unkind and dishonorable, but she lacked courage to refuse to listen to it, for fear that Jenny would call her one of the "sickish, good kind," too. Poor Kitty!—she is not the first girl who has allowed the bugbear, Ridicule, to frighten away good angels knocking at her heart.

By this time, Nelly apparently had explained away the difficulties that had troubled the plump little geography student, for the latter was looking up at her with a grateful smile ; and presently they descended the piazza steps together. Nelly was saying :

"You are not so badly off after all, Bertha for the half-hour bell has not rung yet, and you will have plenty of time to play."

"I owe it all to you," Bertha replied, "if I have, for I never could have understood that lesson by myself. But, Nelly, I did feel real sorry for you this morning about your Bible verse, and there was Jenny Scott laughing at

you all the time. I think it was real mean in her."

"Oh! Bertha," whispered Nelly, "don't talk against your schoolmates; I'm sure it's wrong; besides, I deserved to be laughed at for being so forgetful. And yet," she added, thoughtfully, "I think I did remember the verse, though the exact words slipped from my mind. At any rate, I shall try hard never to forget them again."

"Oh! who'll give me just one push?" called out, at this moment, a little girl, who, after waiting meekly for nearly half an hour, had finally gained possession of the swing.

"I will," said Nelly, promptly, hastening to her side; "wait, Bertha, you shall have the next turn."

The "just one push" was multiplied many times by the willing Nelly, before Bertha found herself in the seat. Her turn did not last quite so long, for her friend's strength was giving out. At last Nelly exerted her aching arms to give one grand final push, and then turned away with a laughing "There, let the old cat die now."

Whether the "old cat" was the swing, or Miss Bertha, I cannot say, and Nelly did not wait to explain. Her attention at that instant was

attracted by hearing Jenny Scott say, in a tone of despair :

“ Oh ! dear, it’s certainly gone ; I’ve looked everywhere. Mother will almost kill me for being so careless.”

Nelly knew well enough that the “almost kill” was an exaggeration, but she walked toward the disconsolate girl, saying, kindly :

“ What have you lost ? Bertha and I will help you look for it.”

“ Oh ! a twenty-dollar note mother gave me to pay my quarter’s bill with,” replied Jenny, bursting into tears. “ I had it when I came out of the house. I’m afraid it’s all trampled down in the grass by this time, and the last bell will ring soon”—then suddenly raising her voice Jenny called out, “ I’ll give my old roller-skates to anybody who finds a twenty-dollar note that I’ve lost somewhere in the yard.”

All crowded eagerly around Jenny.

“ There, don’t waste time, girls,” she almost screamed ; “ the bell will ring in a few moments.

Don’t you hear ? I’ll give my roller skates to the one who finds the money.”

Nearly all the girls would have gladly helped her to look for it without the prospect of any reward ; but the promised skates did not check

their zeal in the least. At it they went, heart, eyes, and hands—running in different directions, bumping against each other, looking into all sorts of impossible places, peering into bushes, picking up old soiled bits of paper, with the joyful cry, “I’ve found it!” fairly combing the poor half-killed grass with eager fingers; and there was the bill all the time lying out in broad daylight, close by the fence where Jenny Scott had been standing!

Nellie Davis was the first to spy it. Quick as thought she glanced at Bertha, who was too poor to buy roller skates for herself, and the last clause of her Bible verse flashed through her mind—“*In honor preferring one another.*”

“Yes, Bertha shall have the honor of finding it,” said Nelly to herself, as she hurried up to the little girl, and whispered:

“Run over by the end fence, and search—the girls haven’t looked there yet—quick! Bertie.”

In less than a moment, Bertha, not at all “slow” in her movements now, came bounding back, waving the bank note over her head.

“Hurrah!” she cried, her eyes fairly sparkling with delight. “I’ve found it! Jenny! Jenny! here’s your money!”

Jenny, as she eagerly held out her hand, ex-

claimed: "I had given it up entirely—much obliged to you, Bertha! You'll find my skates over there by the basement door."

At this moment the school-bell rang, and all the girls hastened to obey the summons.

After school the teacher summoned Nelly to her side.

"You have said your lessons so well to-day, Nelly, that I shall not give you a bad mark for missing your Bible verse. But after this, remember, my dear, that merely reading it over once will not suffice. You must learn it thoroughly, as Jenny Scott does."

If the teacher could have looked into the hearts of her two pupils, she probably would not have spoken precisely as she did; but Nelly felt the justice of her reproof, and replied, cheerfully:

"Yes, Miss Allen, I'll try; but it has always been difficult for me to remember anything word for word."

That evening when little Charley kissed Nelly for "good night," somebody asked him how much he loved her.

"I love her *so* much," answered Charley stretching his dimpled arms high above his head, "I love her *more'n* I do my horsey!"

And here my story must end. It is only the

history of a day, to be sure ; but is not life made up of days ?

“ Days are golden links, God's token,
Reaching heaven ; one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken,
Ere the pilgrimage be done.”

What a blessed thing it would be if we could rivet each of these golden links with something beautiful and true, *learned by heart* !

